

HCS HB 198 -- PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

SPONSOR: Morris

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Health Insurance by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Insurance by a vote of 9 to 0.

A health carrier or managed care plan offering a health benefit plan that provides prescription drug coverage must offer as part of the plan medication synchronization services developed by the carrier or plan that allows for the alignment of refill dates for an enrollee's prescription drugs that are covered benefits. Under this medication synchronization service the plan or carrier is prohibited from charging an amount in excess of the otherwise applicable co-payment amount under the plan for dispensing a prescription in a quantity less than the prescribed amount if certain requirements are met as specified in the bill and must provide a full dispensing fee to the pharmacy that dispenses the prescription drug to the covered person.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill is for people who take a lot of medications each month. The bill allows a patient who sees a doctor once a year but must make multiple trips to a pharmacy each month to pick up medication to treat chronic diseases. The legislation can help everyone with chronic conditions; however, it will help the older population most because they use the most chronic medications. Pharmacies can long fill or short fill a prescription to synchronize medications to a fill time that is best for the patient. The synchronization is not mandatory, but the bill does provide an option for those who are constantly running by the pharmacy. Synchronization can cut down on hospital visits because it helps a patient to be compliant with his or her medication regimen. For many Missourians, visiting the pharmacy is not just a quick trip to the corner, it's a trip to the city to find an in-network pharmacy.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Morris; Jorgen Schlemeier; Missouri Biotechnology Association; Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield of Missouri; Brad Bates; American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; Pfizer, Inc.; Missouri Nurses Association; Biotechnology Industry Organization; and Boehringer Ingeheim.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that they would like a compromise on the language, such as language similar to that passed in Colorado, and are willing to work on changes to obtain a compromise.

Testifying on the bill were America's Health Insurance Plans;
Humana, Inc.; and Missouri State Medical Association.